

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 22042 121816Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 /084 W
-----110792 131431Z /43

R 121137Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4659
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY WARSAWS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: FR, UR, SHUM
SUBJECT: SOVIET DISSIDENT TRIALS-- FRENCH REACTIONS

1. THE SOVIET DISSIDENT TRIALS HAVE PROVOKED AN IN-
DIGNANT REACTION ACROSS THE FRENCH POLITICAL SPECTRUM.
THE QUAI D'ORSAY ISSUED A STATEMENT ON JULY 10 EXPRES-
SING THE "SERIOUS CONCERN" OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND
RECALLING THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENTS OF THE HELSINKI
FINAL ACT AND THE JOINT FRANCO-SOVIET DECLARATION ON
DETENTE SIGNED LAST YEAR BY BREZHNEV AND GISCARD. A
WIDE VARIETY OF POLITICAL AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS HAVE
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PAGE 02 PARIS 22042 121816Z

PUBLISHED SIMILAR STATEMENTS.
2. THE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCF) DELIVERED A PROTEST NOTE
TO THE SOVIET EMBASSY ASKING THAT SHCHARANSKIY AND
GINZBURG BE FREED, AND THAT REPRESSION BE ENDED. THE
COMMUNIST DAILY HUMANITE HAS GIVEN THE TRIALS FRONT-
PAGE TREATMENT, WITH BOTH A REPORT AND A MAJOR EDITORIAL
SIGNED BY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF RENE ANDRIEU. THE EDITORIAL

WAS COUCHED IN NOTABLY STRONG AND EVEN SARCASTIC TERMS. IT SAID THAT "NO PROOF OF SHCHARANSKIY'S GUILT HAS BEEN PRESENTED PUBLICLY." ON GINZBURG, THE COMMUNIST PAPER ASKED "IS HE GUILTY ONLY OF HAVING SHOWN HIS DISAGREEMENT WITH THE POLICY OF HIS GOVERNMENT? WE THINK THAT IS HIS RIGHT AS A CITIZEN." ANDRIEU'S EDITORIAL ASSERTED THAT, THOUGH THE SOVIETS WERE CERTAINLY THE MASTERS IN THEIR OWN HOUSE, "THERE ARE ALSO UNIVERSAL LAWS FOR WHICH WE ARE FIGHTING AND WHICH WE SHOULD BE FIRST TO RESPECT. AN ACCUSED PERSON, WHOEVER HE MAY BE, SHOULD BE FREE TO CHOOSE HIS LAWYER, AND COURTS SHOULD HOLD THEIR SESSIONS IN THE FULL LIGHT OF DAY." HIS ARTICLE CONCLUDED THAT THE ASPIRATION FOR LIBERTY IS ONE OF THE MOST FORCEFUL IDEAS OF OUR TIME; "A LIBERTY FROM WHICH EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BENEFIT, EVEN THOSE WHO THINK DIFFERENTLY FROM US." AS USUAL, HOWEVER, HUMANITE HEDGED ITS POSITION BY REITERATING THE OVERALL RESPECT THE FRENCH PARTY HAS FOR THE USSR, BY ASSERTING THAT THE US IS NO BETTER PLACED THAN THE USSR TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS AND BY SUGGESTING THAT US MOTIVES IN CRITICIZING THE SOVIETS WERE REALLY TO DELAY THE CONCLUSION OF A SALT AGREEMENT.

3. A PROTEST DEMONSTRATION IN PARIS ON JULY 11 BROUGHT TOGETHER SEVERAL THOUSAND PERSONS IN AN UNUSUALLY BROAD ASSEMBLAGE OF POLITICAL AND LABOR GROUPS, INCLUDING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GAULLISTS, CENTRISTS, SOCIALISTS AND AN OFFICIAL PCF DELEGATION, SHOWING THE UNANIMITY OF FRENCH CONDEMNATION OF THE SOVIET TRIALS.

4. MRS. NATHALIE SHCHARANSKIY ADDED TO THE FRENCH PUBLIC FOCUS ON THE TRIALS BY HOLDING A PRESS CONFERENCE IN PARIS ON JULY 10 TOGETHER WITH SHCHARANSKIY'S THREE FRENCH LAWYERS. MRS. SHCHARANSKIY ANNOUNCED SHE WOULD ASK TO SEE GISCARD, BUT SHE HAS APPARENTLY NOT PRESSED THIS IDEA. SHE LATER APPEARED AT THE PROTEST DEMONSTRATION.

5. THE ABSENCE OF FRENCH EMBASSY REPS AT THE SITE OF THE TRIALS, IN CONTRAST TO OTHER WESTERN EMBASSIES, HAS BEEN NOTED IN THE PARIS PRESS, BUT THIS POINT HAS NOT ATTRACTED MUCH INTEREST.

6. COMMENT: THE PCF'S STRONG--IF HEDGED--CRITICISM OF THE USSR HAS TWO GOALS: JUMP ON THIS MAJOR PUBLICITY BAND WAGON WHICH HAS WIDE SUPPORT IN THE FRENCH PRESS AND PUBLIC, AND REDUCE THE PARTY'S GROWING STALINIST IMAGE SINCE THE MARCH ELECTIONS BY REVERTING TO ONE OF

THE MAIN THEMES (LIBERTIES) OF ITS TWENTY-SECOND CON-
GRESS.
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PARIS22042
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780287-0315
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780769/aaaacfzw.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 66410477-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2035173
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET DISSIDENT TRIALS-- FRENCH REACTIONS
TAGS: SHUM, FR, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/66410477-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014